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NSC BRIEFING

4 May 1960

BELGIAN CONGO

- I. We foresee a variety of problems arising as the Congo approaches the 30 June independence date amid frantic efforts by Brussels to help Congolese get ready for independent government and resolve economic difficulties.
- A. Legislative election campaign has begun despite recurring indications of tribal unrest. Some 80-odd political parties in Congo at present but probably will be some consolidation before elections begin mid-May.
- B. Elections unlikely lead to domination by any one party or coalition, but two men leading field (Patrice Lumumba, Joseph Kasavubu)

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- II. Confusion in Congo may facilitate Communist penetration.
- A. Roundtable conference in Brussels last January was occasion for Congo politicians to seek outside financial aid for elections. Some delegates visited European satellites and several are believed to have been promised Communist support.

State Dept. review completed

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B. Although no known Communists among Congo leaders, bloc help to several persons--including Lumumba--may enable Communists to influence policies of independent Congo.

1. At present, Czech Consulate is only bloc representation in Congo.

C. US Consulate-general believes Communist penetration activities increasing. Growing interest in post-independence bloc aid may push Congo toward bloc-oriented neutralism.

III. Meanwhile, Belgians seeking US aid to meet Congo deficit.

A. Belgian officials have warned that "economic and political turmoil" will result if outside aid of \$120-135 million not obtained before independence.

B. Flight of European capital from Congo, accelerated with promise of independence, is a major problem (first half '59 - \$50 million; second half '59 - \$80 million; Jan '60 alone - \$20 million). Recent Belgian controls governing outward flow of capital irritating interests with large holdings unable to repatriate funds.

C. Economic roundtable conference now in progress in Brussels. Results up to now inconclusive, but Congolese critical of shaky economic structure being presented them by Belgians.

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